

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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SUBJECT: CONFRONTATION BETWEEN AUTONOMOUS UNIONS AND CCU

REFERENCE: ROME A315

1. BEGIN SUMMARY. WHAT WAS PLANNED BY THE FEDERATION CGIL-CISL-UIL (CCU) AS A QUIET MONTH OF AUGUST IN ANTICIPATION OF DIFFICULT NATIONAL CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS AND CONCERTED EFFORTS TO REVIVE THE ITALIAN ECONOMY IN COOPERATION WITH THE GOI IN SEPTEMBER WAS FRUSTRATED BY THE UNLIKELY ALLIANCE OF AUTONOMOUS UNIONS, THE NEO-FASCIST CISNAL AND EXTREME LEFT WING EXTRA-PARLIAMENTARY CUBISTS. A SERIES OF STRIKE ACTIONS WHICH WAS CONDEMNED BY THE CCU HAS BEEN DISRUPTING AIR AND RAILROAD TRAVEL AS WELL AS OTHER IMPORTANT PUBLIC SERVICES DURING THE PEAK AUGUST HOLIDAY PERIOD. END SUMMARY.

2. THE NORMALLY QUIET MONTH OF AUGUST HAS BEEN DISTURBED BY
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STRIKES CALLED BY AUTONOMOUS UNIONS OF AIRLINE PILOTS, RAILROAD

WORKERS, FERRYBOAT PERSONNEL, STREET CLEANERS, CUSTOMS OFFICIALS AND AUTOMOBILE REGISTRATION OFFICIALS. SINCE THE AUTONOMOUS UNIONS ARE PRIMARILY INTERESTED IN DEFENDING AND EXPANDING THEIR CONTRACTUAL BARGAINING POWER, THEY HAVE NOT BEEN CONCERNED WITH THE EFFECT OF THEIR STRIKE ACTIONS ON PUBLIC OPINION. THE IMMEDIATE RESULT HAS BEEN TO FRUSTRATE THE VACATION PLANS OF MILLIONS OF ITALIAN WORKERS, RETURNING IMMIGRANTS AND FOREIGN TOURISTS. A SECONDARY RESULT HAS BEEN A SHARP RISE IN THE UNPOPULARITY OF THE AUTONOMOUS UNIONS IN PARTICULAR AND THE ENTIRE LABOR MOVEMENT IN GENERAL.

3. THE AUTONOMOUS UNIONS TEND TO CONTROL THE MAJORITY OF WORKERS IN VERY LIMITED SECTORS SUCH AS AIRLINE PILOTS (ANPAC), WHERE THEY HAVE ORGANIZED ABOUT 1450 OUT OF 1700 PILOTS OR A MINORITY IN CRITICAL SECTORS SUCH AS THE RAILROADS (FISAFS), WHERE THEY FACE STIFF COMPETITION FROM THE CCU BUT ARE ABLE THROUGH SELECTIVE STRIKE ACTION TO CREATE CONFUSION IN IMPORTANT PUBLIC SERVICES (SEE REFAIR). IN THE RAILROAD SECTOR THEIR STRATEGY HAS BEEN TO DISRUPT TRAFFIC IN MAJOR NODAL POINTS SUCH AS ROME, WHERE A FEW STRIKERS CAN HAVE MAXIMUM EFFECT. CURRENT STRATEGY IN THE AIRLINES SECTOR IS TO GIVE SEALED ENVELOPES TO SELECTED ANPAC PILOTS EACH DAY WHO ARE INSTRUCTED TO REFUSE TO FLY FOR SEVERAL HOURS. IN THIS WAY ALITALIA IS UNABLE TO TAKE PREVENTIVE MEASURES AND PASSENGERS CANNOT BOOK WITH THE CERTAINTY THAT THEIR FLIGHTS WILL TAKE PLACE.

4. WHILE THE AUTONOMOUS UNIONS FEEL THEIR EXISTENCE THREATENED BY THE DISPROPORTIONATE BARGAINING POWER OF THE CCU, THEY ARE PROBABLY MORE RESPONSIVE TO THE POPULIST DEMANDS OF THE RANK AND FILE THAN THE MORE THAN SEVEN MILLION STRONG FEDERATION. AS THE CCU HAS TENDED TO INVOLVE ITSELF IN DIRECT NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE GOI ON BROAD ISSUES SUCH AS ECONOMIC RECOVERY OR TRANSPORTATION REFORM, IT HAS NECESSARILY SACRIFICED SOME RANK AND FILE DEMANDS. THE RAILROAD WORKERS ARE STRIKING FOR A 100,000 LIRE (ABOUT \$150) ADVANCE PAYMENT AGAINST FUTURE WAGE IMPROVEMENTS, A RESTRUCTURING OF JOB CLASSIFICATIONS AND EQUALIZATION OF RAILROAD WAGES WITH THOSE OF OTHER PUBLIC EMPLOYEES. THE PILOTS ARE STRIKING AGAINST A CCU-ALITALIA UNDERSTANDING TO NEGOTIATE A SINGLE NATIONAL CONTRACT FOR ALL LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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CIVIL AVIATION EMPLOYEES.

5. IN SEEKING TO BREAK WHAT THEY SEE AS THE DICTATORIAL BARGAINING POWER OF THE CCU, THE AUTONOMOUS UNIONS HAVE FORMED AN UNUSUAL ALLIANCE WITH THE NEO-FASCIST CISNAL CONFEDERATION, WHICH IS ASSOCIATED WITH THE EXTREME RIGHT-WING MSI-DN, AND WITH THE EXTREME LEFT-WING EXTRA-PARLIAMENTARY CUB GROUP WHO REJECT ITALY'S PRESENT PARTY, PARLIAMENTARY AND UNION STRUCTURES.

THE CUBISTS ARE REPRESENTED AMONG RAILWAY TICKET SELLERS WHERE
THEY SUPPORT THE OBJECTIVES OF FISAFS.

6. COMMENT: GIVEN THE CONTINUING POLITICAL TENSION IN ITALY
GROWING FROM THE DISARRAY WITHIN THE DC AND THE CONFUSION
OF OTHER DEMOCRATIC PARTIES OVER HOW TO COPE WITH RECENT
COMMUNIST GAINS, THE INCREASINGLY INTENSE CONFRONTATION
BETWEEN THE AUTONOMOUS UNIONS AND THE CCU COULD HAVE SERIOUS
POLITICAL CONSEQUENCES. GROWING PUBLIC FRUSTRATION WITH
SEEMING EXAGGERATED USE OF THE STRIKE WEAPON SEEMS ALSO
LIKELY TO RESULT IN DEMANDS FOR LEGISLATION ESPECIALLY IN
THE PUBLIC SECTOR LIMITING THIS ULTIMATE TRADITIONAL WEAPON
OF UNIONS. VOLPE

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